

REMARKS

Claim 6 has been amended to define the heating step (b) as being conducted “in an atmosphere of an inert gas.” See, for example, page 6, line 35 to page 7, line 1. Newly presented claim 11 is cancelled claim 7 rewritten in independent form.

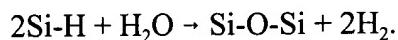
Newly presented claim 12 is allowable claim 8 rewritten in independent form. In view of the indication of allowability of claim 8, it is respectfully submitted that claim 12 and claims 13-21 dependent thereon are in condition for allowance. The examiner will note that claims 13 and 14 correspond to original claims 9 and 10 respectively. New claims 15-17, like the amendment to claim 6, find support at page 7, line 35 to page 8, line 36. Newly presented claims 18-21 find support in the teachings of the paragraph spanning pages 6 and 7, especially at page 7, lines 5-10.

The rejection of claim 7 and, to the extent it might be applicable, to new claim 11 (original 7 rewritten in independent form) is respectfully traversed. As noted by the examiner, Zank teaches at column 4, lines 56-58 that “depending on the atmosphere and conditions, this curing reaction may produce hydrogen gas as a by-product”. Parenthetically, the examiner refers to “hydrosilylation” rather than “curing” in the office action at page 5, penultimate line. This is

erroneous because hydrosilylation proceeds:



and does not yield hydrogen as by-product. In Zank hydrogen is produced by curing the copolymer in a moisture-containing atmosphere as follows:



At column 4, lines 59 to column 5, line 3, Zank describes that an insulation material produced from prior art materials produces undesirable by-products containing carbon and chlorine, whereas the insulation material produced from the copolymer of Zank produces hydrogen which is advantageous for the properties of the insulation material.

At column 12, line 64 to column 13, line 5, Zank teaches that the copolymer is preferably stored in a moisture-free atmosphere and that, after applied or coated, the coating will absorb moisture, which advantageously promotes curing.

From the foregoing teachings of Zank, it should be recognized that the generation of hydrogen which occurs during curing of the Zank's copolymer in a moisture-containing atmosphere is considered advantageous by Zank. Therefore, there would have been no purpose

or motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to remove hydrogen or moisture from the atmosphere in which the curing in the Zank process is carried out.

Cekada discloses applying a solvent solution containing siloxane (release agent) to an interior of a mold cavity and, thereafter, the solvent (volatiles) is removed by, for example, using reduced pressure. Only after completion of the removal of the volatiles, is a polyurethane foam composition is filled into the mold cavity and cured. Thus, in Cekada, the curing/molding is not performed under a reduced pressure.

Neither the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary nor Ishida have any relevance to curing within a mold at a reduced pressure. Thus, in none of the four references applied by the examiner is there any motivation to have applied a vacuum in the molding/curing within the mold cavity.

The rejection of claim 6 for obviousness over Zank in view of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and Ishida is respectfully traversed especially on the basis of the present amendment to claim 6 requiring the use of an inert gas in the heating step. At column 11, lines 58-66 Zank teaches applying their copolymers as a coating on a wafer which is exposed within a

nitrogen atmosphere. However, such a teaching is not suggestive of heating within a mold cavity in an atmosphere of an inert gas. Further, the teachings of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and Ishida cited by the examiner have no relevance to molding within an inert atmosphere.

In conclusion, it is respectfully requested that the examiner reconsider the rejections of record in view of the present amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks.

Respectfully submitted,



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